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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews public testimony that was presented at the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) Regional Forums concerning recommendations by the six NEGP Resource Groups (RGPs). The RGP recommendations focus on ways of measuring/monitoring the nation's/states' progress toward meeting the President's and governors' six national education goals. Between April 12 and May 17, 1991, eight governors conducted NEGP Regional Forums attended by almost 3,000 people, with between 200 and 400 present at each forum. The forums allowed governors and their representatives, regional experts, state and local officials, and the public to offer oral testimony and engage in dialogue with NEGP members. NEGP RGP representatives presented their preliminary recommendations concerning the six goals, heard public comment, and provided the RGPs with feedback for use in preparing their final recommendations. The NEGP also held forums at the April meetings of two national organizations. Patterns in general comments from public testimony are outlined, including support for the goals; need for more than goals and reports; successful goal-related programs; the arts and foreign languages; outcomes and inputs; funding; need for broad involvement and the accommodation of diversity; maintaining local control; teacher-related issues; the purpose and audience of the 1991 NEGP Progress Report; and definition questions. Patterns in public testimony on: readiness for school (Goal 1); high school completion (Goal 2); student achievement and citizenship (Goal 3); science and mathematics (Goal 4); adult literacy and lifelong learning (Goal 5); and safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools (Goal 6) are then provided, along with sample comments and quotations about each goal. (RLC)

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NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS PANEL

MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARD THE
NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS:

PUBLIC TESTIMONY
VOLUME 2

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SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY
ON MEASURES FOR 1991
PROGRESS REPORT

AUGUST 26, 1991

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NATIONAL EDUCATION GOALS:

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General Public Testimony

Patterns in General Comments from Public Testimony

There were two objectives to the National Education Goals Panel's outreach activities. The first was to collect testimony on the indicators to use in the Progress Report. The second was to hear what the public had to say about the National Education Goals.

Support for the Goals. Most people began their testimony by saying that they endorsed the goals. Even those who suggested amending the goals generally did so by seeking to add explicit mention of another constituency or program area that deserved attention.

Praise for Governors, the President, and Resource Groups. Those testifying expressed appreciation for the effort and investment in education the Governors and President are making, and for the technical merit of the Resource Group recommendations.

Goals and reports not enough. A recurring theme was that, however valuable the report, measuring progress alone will not improve education. The story was told of a rancher weighing his sheep for market. The man comes to one sheep that does not weigh enough and puts it aside. After a while he puts it back on the scale and is surprised to find that it weighs the same. Weighing alone is not enough; we also need to feed the sheep. The preponderance of public testimony addressed, either directly or indirectly, what needs to be done to reach the goals.

Goal-related programs that work. A former Governor's staffer began her testimony, "Governor, I want you to know I'm doing a good job" (in a new goals-related job.) She made explicit what was implicit in the majority of testimony: a plea to remember a variety of programs and professional constituencies doing things that they believe will help reach the goals, including most frequently the arts, foreign languages, health education and services, vocational education, and libraries. People wanted to talk more about how to achieve the goals than about how to measure them. They turned to the National Education Goals Panel in the absence of other goals-related infrastructure.

The arts and foreign languages. The most vocal and persistent constituency group to testify was the arts community, ranging from arts educators to business people. While not always specific in what they wanted the Panel to do, they were eloquent on the value of the arts. One looked around and said, "You all look so grim; the arts will bring you joy." Both the arts and foreign language advocates wanted these areas included in Goal 3 and were confident that assessment tools exist to measure their mastery.

Outcomes and inputs. There was substantial testimony expressing the tension between the notion of emphasizing outputs (educational results) and including inputs (programs, policies, and resources). Many testified in support of the emphasis on outputs as avoiding self-congratulation based on efforts made. Many others asked for the inclusion of 2

input data. Dan Morris, president of the Colorado Education Association, said, "The purpose of assessment is not to see whether we achieve the national goals in education.... The purpose is to determine what information policymakers and educators need to meet the goals.... The panel's emphasis on results--divorced from any realistic discussion of what produces these results--may leave the public merely frustrated."

Funding. There is tension in the public attitude between the understanding that money is tight and the belief that it is nonetheless essential for reform. The result was not a request for massive spending but rather a pervasive skepticism about the probable effectiveness and even sincerity of the goals process.

Need for broad involvement. An enormous amount of testimony related to the need to gain deeper and broader involvement in education, ranging from more parent involvement in the lives of their children, to business involvement with schools, to coordinating health and human services with education, to involving teachers and taxpayers in the goals process, to coordinating state and federal government efforts. This was related to the almost universal emphasis upon concern for the "whole" child, which only a few felt conflicted with higher academic standards.

Accommodating diversity. While expressing a need for standard definitions, and appreciation for national goals and even standards, an enormous amount of testimony urged continuing sensitivity to varying forms of diversity, including disabilities, rural settings, racial/ethnic, cultural, and language backgrounds, learning styles and giftedness, religious concerns, and the needs and strengths of various role groups.

Maintaining local control. People advocated maintaining local control, in some instances as a valued tradition and in others as a necessary condition for site-based management and the empowerment of teachers, parents, and other local constituencies.

Teacher-related issues. There was repeated testimony regarding the need to secure teacher ownership of the goals and to provide them with better teacher preparation and professional development.

Purpose and audience of the report. People had a variety of ideas about what the Progress Report would be and who it was for. Some thought the purpose was to help schools improve; others thought that the purpose was to hold someone accountable for results; and still others thought the purpose was to inform and motivate the public. Some thought the audience should be parents and families; others, educators and the school governance structure; others, a broader community of taxpayers, business, and all human service delivery personnel. Some felt these various purposes and audiences could all be accommodated with one report; others did not.

Questions of definition. Testimony on almost every goal included the need to develop operational definitions of terms, especially "readiness," "dropout" and "graduation rate," "citizenship," and "literacy."

Public Testimony on Goal 1

Patterns in Public Testimony on Readiness for School

This goal was the subject of a great deal of testimony, both oral (72) and written (118). Much of the testimony focused on the high level of importance people attach to this goal and the types of changes needed to achieve it.

Support

Most people strongly supported the Resource Group recommendations and praised its report. Some endorsed the report at a general level, others at the level of health and nutrition, home and parenting conditions, preschool programs, and others at an indicator-specific level. Items pertaining to prenatal health care, nutrition, and children's access to health care were repeatedly singled out for support. Many specifically supported the Resource Group's formulation of the five aspects of readiness to learn.

Many of those who testified heartily endorsed the Resource Group's statement of philosophy that the data being recommended should *not* be used to keep "less ready" children out of school or to label them as deficient. It was recommended that every effort be made to ensure that information developed through these indicators be used to help children receive the services they need.

Concerns

Many people expressed concerns that the proposed indicators would not provide information on the availability of programs known to be effective in enhancing school readiness. One person commented that "measurement strategies are balanced too heavily toward child functioning and not heavily enough toward evaluating the functioning and abilities of individuals, agencies, and institutions responsible for providing the means by which children can reach school ready to learn. With the young child it is ... clear ... that lack of 'readiness to learn' is less the fault of the individual learner than it is the fault of the conditions in which the learner finds himself." (Ronald Lally, Center for Child & Family Studies, Far West Laboratory, Sausalito, Calif.)

Many expressed concern regarding the possible abuse of readiness data to screen or track children, but these related primarily to indicators proposed for future reports and data collections.

Suggested Alternatives or Refinements

Many of the alternative measures suggested relate to tracking either social service "inputs" thought to be supportive of children's readiness (including Head Start and other preschool programs, data on availability of business and government programs, access to child care, child-adult ratios in child care, training of child care providers, access to family support

and parenting training, WIC, and other services) or social conditions thought to predict lack of readiness, including poverty and abuse and neglect rates. Several mentioned the need for good indicators of the quality of day care.

A few individuals suggested measuring students' readiness to learn throughout the K-12 years, not just in the prekindergarten and early elementary grades. Others suggested looking specifically at math, science, and arts programming for children in early childhood programs. Arts advocates pointed to the value of art in nurturing creativity and developing school readiness. Several librarians suggested determining whether preschoolers possessed library cards and participated in library story hours.

A few suggested adding a sixth dimension to the Resource Group's five aspects of school readiness. One person said the extra dimension pertained to learning style (the ability to demonstrate curiosity and make one's needs known). Another suggested that it is important to measure children's capacity for play as a predictor of school success.

A number of people suggested creating either defined levels of readiness, bands or ranges of readiness levels, or standards for aggregate improvement. They argued children develop at varying paces and that the use of ranges or bands would recognize this formally.

There was virtually no testimony that focused on identifying information and skills that children should master before they start school. At almost every forum, the point was made that all children are born ready to learn and that schools must be ready for children.

Several people testifying on Goal 5 (adult literacy) felt that the availability of literacy training for parents was important to measure and report because of its likely consequences for children's readiness for school.

Other variables suggested in testimony include: the percentage of eligible children enrolled in Head Start; state regulations of child care group size; indicators on the transition from preschool programs to school; the availability of family support services; measures of interagency collaboration in meeting the needs of children and their families; access of children under three years of age to food, shelter, warm and knowledgeable care givers, safe environments, and health services; the percentage of parents receiving parent training and parent support opportunities; the literacy and language of kindergarteners and their parents and their access to learning opportunities; children's familiarity with printed materials; and parent involvement.

Sample Comments and Quotations

- "We're pleased (at the heavy focus) on health and nutrition, home and parenting conditions, and access to preschool programs" and an emphasis on prevention over remediation. (Nancy Elson, President, Illinois Association of School Boards)
- "Birth certificates will prove a good source for these data." (Mary Harvey, Nebraska State Education Association)
- "Very seldom have I read a document that is so 'right on' and visionary as this one." (James McCabe, Superintendent, Lake County School District R-1, Leadville, Colorado)
- "The report reflects the current thinking of the early childhood education community, and I agree with the emphasis on the whole child." (David Thurmond, V.P., Marketing & Programming, Kentucky Center for the Arts)
- "For the measures you create, create *bands or ranges of acceptable performance*. This will help keep you sensitive to individual variations in the rate of development and avoid checklists of what all 5-year-olds should be able to do." (Laura Mast, North Carolina Department of Education)
- "The arts especially relate to the dimensions of emotional maturity, social confidence, language richness, and general knowledge." (Frank Lazarus, IV, President, Maryland Institute, College of Art)
- "Learning both in and through the arts helps to cultivate higher order thinking skills. While experts in education research have indicated that higher order skills resist precise definition, we can describe their key features. These include multiple solutions, nuanced judgments, the imposition of meaning, as well as the effortful nature of such skills are inherent in the arts when taught as serious, sequential subject matter." (John E. Frohnmayer, Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C.)
- "Based on our experience of trying to create a literate family environment in the homes we work in, I would like to emphasize two things. The measures you plan to use to determine outcomes fall short of capturing the true picture. I would also like to emphasize that if Goal 1 is to be met, collaboration between Head Start, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), JOBS, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), and other government agencies is essential so that services are not duplicated, monies can be pooled for cost effective delivery of services to children and adults, and quality programs can be maintained, monitored, and implemented." (Lisa Levinson, Director, Project Even Start, Waterville, Maine; Member, National Even Start Advisory Council)

- "Make sure that at-risk is not used in the literal sense. It is a condition that has nothing to do with IQ. Given the proper experiences, resources, and enough time on task, at-risk youngsters can be as successful as any other youngster." (Mary Scott, National Association of Federal Education Program Administrators, Marianna, Arkansas)
- "The best criterion for judging our nation's success at meeting the readiness challenge is not to look at how well children and families can fit into our schools but to look carefully at how well our schools fit the unique and varied capacities and talents of our children and families." (Peter Higbee, Tri-County Head Start, Berlin, New Hampshire)
- "I commend the panel on the recognition of the importance of the early years of a child's life. All children are born ready to learn. If they have adequate nutrition, medical care, and nurturing from parents and quality child care settings during their preschool years, they will arrive at school ready to *continue* their learning." (Karen Dewey, President, New Hampshire Association for the Education of Young Children)
- "Any definition of readiness should recognize [that children develop along a continuum] of different rates in different areas such as social maturity, physical health, cognitive skills, and knowledge levels. Desired optimal levels at entry should be specified in terms of that broad range of development. However ... they *should not* be used to exclude students from programs. " (Kayetta Meadows, West Virginia Education Association, Charlestown)
- "The NGEP's ... (report should identify) a fifth ... (aspect of children's readiness.) The dimensions of the social, economic, and education ... (problems) confronting low-income and minority children growing up in urban America demand that we measure progress toward the alleviation of conditions that have been widely documented as contributors to low student achievement." (Larry Leverett, New Jersey Department of Education—Urban Education, Trenton)

Public Testimony on Goal 2

Patterns in Public Testimony on High School Completion

A relatively small number of people submitted testimony on the school completion goal, but those who did spoke with deep conviction about the need to better serve students who are at risk of dropping out of school.

Support

Most people supported the Resource Group recommendations, and several offered alternative indicators. Some strongly recommended using the Resource Groups' proposed plan for 1991. One strongly supported the 1991 plan, suggesting the importance of collecting on-time graduation rates for 19-20 year olds as well as the delayed graduation rate for 24-25 year olds because of the important social aspects that makes dropping out, even temporarily, an "indelibly bitter" experience.

Concerns

One general and two technical concerns were expressed. One testifier thought that the Resource Group suggestion that completion be reported by race and ethnicity signaled the interpretation that those factors were considered more important than poverty or family life in predicting dropouts; that implication should be avoided, the person said. From a technical standpoint, several people pointed out that the small sample size used in the CPS made it hard to use for accurate racial/ethnic data. It was also noted that High School and Beyond and the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS: 88) each report on only a single age cohort each.

As with testimony on all of the goals, there were questions about how the data would be used and whether they would really help solve education problems. For example, the Superintendent of Schools in Claremont, N.Y., said, "I agree with the resource panel that high school diplomas are a rough guide in assessing whether the individual possesses certain skills, knowledge, and values. It will take time to more clearly show the significance of graduation and its interrelationship with performance standards. I realize this is the baseline stage, but, again, ask how will the data assist us?"

Suggested Alternatives or Refinements

One person suggested reporting on the 3rd grade predictors of dropping out, not just what happens at the high school level. Another indicated that school and class size should be measured because small schools and classes appear to encourage students to stay in school.

Sample Comments and Quotations

- "I strongly support the plan outlined for 1991; the basic plan they (the Resource Group) have crafted for the 1991 report is a good one." (Larry Guthrie, Far West Laboratory, on upgraded CPS and Common Core of Data surveys in the future.)
- "Goal 2 is an area of high importance--some studies show that by the end of the 3rd grade, we can predict with 80 percent accuracy the level of students' later success and likelihood of dropping out of school. This predictability underscores the importance of early childhood education and the need for a total reconceptualization and reconstruction of the education system where all students succeed. Such an effort will strengthen the entire system so that the objectives of Goals 3 to 5 will be met. (David P. Crandall, Executive Director, The Regional Laboratory of the Northeast and the Islands, Andover, Mass.)
- "Greater clarification is needed on the proposed national student data reporting system, particularly on how it would be useful to school staff. This seems like a monumental undertaking, yet little justification is provided for it." (Albert Shanker, president, American Federation of Teachers)
- "If it is the intent of the Panel to lay the foundation for collective efforts to raise both our expectations and achievement, why are we spending up to 5 years to collect data? The data should be collected in measurable action steps to remediate the problems about which we know volumes and not to finely tune research models." (Noreen O'Connor, Vermont Council on Vocational-Technical Education)
- "High school completion: Data needs to be collected for Hispanic dropouts to include children (recent immigrants) who have never attended school; parenting education and parent involvement; and, national student record system in conjunction with National Migrant Education Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS) established in 1969." (Carlos Trevino, Migrant Child Institute, Grandview, Wash.)
- Victor Herbert, superintendent of Phoenix Public Schools, supports collecting on-time graduation (19/20-year-olds) as well as delayed graduation or credentialing (24/25-year-olds) because the social aspects of on-time graduation are likely to make the experience of (even temporarily) dropping out a "indelibly bitter" experience, when linked with perceived failure, auguring "serious antisocial behavior."
- It is important to know the mix of traditional diplomas, GED, alternative route, and certificates of attendance you have in school completion rate.
- Focusing on the race and ethnicity of school completers seems to imply that those factors, rather than poverty or family life, account for heightened dropout rates. NEGP should seek to avoid that implication.

Public Testimony on Goal 3

Patterns in Public Testimony on Student Achievement and Citizenship

This goal received more public testimony than any other goal, in both the regional forums (96) and written testimony (181). The overwhelming majority of the testimony focused on the Resource Group's proposals for future indicators---developing national subject matter standards and a national system of assessment. The following pertains to the September 1991 report.

Support

Most testimony began with an endorsement of the goal and support for the merit of the Resource Group report. The strongest and most frequent support was for the use of student achievement results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and, to a lesser degree, the Advanced Placement (AP) exams. Supporters point out that data exists over time and in the subject areas specified by the goals.

Many in the arts community advocate using 1979 NAEP data to report progress in the arts and strongly urge including the arts in the subjects to be included in NEGP reports.

Most people supported the use of Advanced Placement exams as direct measures of "challenging subject matter." Similarly, most agreed with the Resource Group recommendation that SAT/ACT scores should not be used.

International comparisons of student achievement were occasionally discussed. Some strongly endorsed comparing state student achievement scores to an international standard. This was seen as more pertinent and constructive than ranking states against each other. The national poll and state reports were rarely discussed.

Concerns

A few were concerned that NAEP would not function well if used as a "high stakes" exam. Some said its current utility depends on its being unobtrusive. Its use in the NEGP report was seen as creating a potential temptation to teach to the test that does not now exist. A significant subset of testimony addressed the need for more authentic, or performance oriented assessments of higher order thinking skills and critical thinking. These people did not feel NAEP represented the model that they were looking for. While some defended certain progressive elements in NAEP, most saw it as the best we have. Only Rolf Blank of the Council of Chief State School Officer saw NAEP as exemplifying the kind of consensus-building process envisioned in the Resource Group's future vision.

Some concern was consistently expressed about reporting the number of AP takers because variations in the number of test takers might be unrelated to the real extent of student competence in challenging subject matter.

Some testimony questioned the value of reporting course enrollments. These persons feared that endorsing this indicator could legitimize rigidities in current course content and sequence that are incompatible with curriculum standards, such as those developed by NCTM.

Many advocates for specific aspects of the curriculum or a broader school program, (librarians, foreign language teachers, special education teachers, health advocates, vocational education teachers, and overwhelmingly the arts advocates) felt that their programs played important roles in schools, and in the lives of children. They suggested that attempts to meet the goals would put their programs at risk if the NEGP did not report on these dimensions of school life.

Some were concerned that the Resource Group was recommending no measure of citizenship. They advocated several ways of doing so.

Several individuals testified to the risks inherent in establishing any national progress report in five subject areas. They were concerned any national report might ultimately compromise the freedom of states and local school districts.

Suggested Alternatives or Refinement

Most testimony focused on the Resource Group's proposed future standards and examination system, but there also were some recommendations for alternatives for the September report. Much testimony urged including in Goal 3 information on the arts (as well as foreign languages, citizenship, health education, vocational education and other subject matter and program areas).

Specific suggestions included reporting the number and percent of schools offering and students enrolling in foreign language study, and/or demonstrating competence in a foreign language. Some wanted this done in a manner that signaled the value attached to foreign born students' competence in another language.

Sample Comments and Quotations

- "The national educational accountability system should focus on gains rather than levels of achievement. Educational systems and educators can legitimately be held accountable for how much students gain during a given period in which they are at school. It is not legitimate to hold teachers or schools responsible for the level of achievement students exhibit when they enter the class or for the achievement of students at the end of the school year." (Walter E. Hathaway, Portland, Oregon Public Schools)
- "Standardized testing seems to have become the coin of the educational realm. In recent years, it seems that the aims of education and the business of our schools are addressed not so much in terms of curriculum as in terms of who gets tested. By narrowing the curriculum, frustrating teachers and driving students out of school, tests undermine school improvement rather than advance its cause." (Jo Hipsher, Maine Educational Media Association citing George Madaus and Walter Hany)
- "I urge the NEGP to include the arts in the national assessment of knowledge and skill areas." (Peggy Baggett, Executive Director, Virginia Commission for the Arts, Richmond)
- "I solicit... your support for the inclusion of the arts as 'challenging subject matter'... in Goal 3." (Bonnie Rushlow, President, South Carolina Art Education Association)
- "Education in the arts also serves an important, although sometimes overlooked role in defining, transmitting, and fostering cross-cultural understanding---an increasingly vital part of our society and education system. I encourage you to recognize the very unique and effective contribution that the arts can make to the achievement of this objective." (John E. Frohnmayer, Chairman, National Endowment of the Arts)
- "The arts and humanities and vocational education are not included in Goal 3, but are essential for human development and productive lives. Recognition needs to be given to all subject areas so that resources are distributed in a manner that touches the talents and interests of students beyond the basics." (Gloria Hoffman, Des Moines, Iowa Public Schools)
- "It's inconsistent to have an objective to increase the students' competence in a foreign language if you don't consider that one of the domains you test for." (Norma Garnett, Toll Gate High School, Warwick, Rhode Island)
- "We recommend that the NAEP be expanded to include assessment in a foreign language." (Richard Tucker, Center for Applied Linguistics, Washington, D.C.)
- "The study of another foreign language plays a key role in the objectives of Goal 3

since responsible and productive citizens in today's world cannot be ignorant of their role and place in the global community...limited education runs the risk of causing one to lose sight of the wide cultural and linguistic diversity that exists throughout the world and continues to be an integral part of our citizenry." (Robert M. Terry, University of Richmond, VA)

- "On the home front, the United States is rapidly becoming a multilingual and multicultural society. More and more of its people speak a language other than English at home, and there is no indication that this trend is slowing. A more compelling reason for studying a foreign language than this cannot be made." (Susan Helm Smith, Frederick County Public Schools, Frederick, Maryland)
- "Goal 3 as described in the discussion document must be strengthened. The emphasis given to history as one of the five core subjects makes it the sole content area where citizenship education can be taught. Civic education should also be one of the core subjects." (Todd Clark, Constitutional Rights Foundation, Los Angeles, California)
- "The rights and responsibilities of citizenship in our democracy help determine our capacity to compete in a global economy. Success in global markets in turn strengthens our democracy. However, the *Significant Issues and Questions* and the *Interim Report Abstract* neglect to address reporting on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship." (John M. Yarnovic, Pennsylvania State Education Association, Harrisburg)
- "The rationale for eliminating the SAT as an indicator is that the tests do not directly measure what is taught in schools. I must note that instruction and SAT scores, indeed, are related: more academic coursework is associated with higher scores. Moreover, SAT scores analyzed over time can reveal trends in the academic preparation of students who take the test and can provide states and schools with a means of self-evaluation and comparison. It is true that the SAT does not measure specific subject-area outcomes of schooling, but neither is it irrelevant to curriculum and the strength of coursework taken by students." (Alice Houston, Asst. Supt., Seattle Public Schools; Member, Board of Trustees, College Board)
- "It is my understanding that the panel seemed concerned about an assessment tool with which to evaluate our current education program throughout the United States. I do not believe the first task at hand for any of us involved or concerned about the education of our nation's youth should be on the development of another assessment tool. I believe that the development of programs and policies will assist our educational network throughout the nation in upgrading the quality of educational opportunities made available to teachers and children is the place to begin." (Elaine Tobin, South Dakota Farmers' Union, Huron)
- "Goal 3 Resource Group's message is loud and clear: set standards, test achievement

against those standards, and reward on the basis of improved test scores. History demonstrates that this message only discourages teachers from working with children in ways that develop higher order cognitive skills. By creating national curriculum based standards in five discrete content areas and a high stakes context that encourages the ranking of schools, communities, states, and even countries---despite known methodological problems that make such comparisons invalid---the Goals Panel risks averting the nation's attention and energies to superficial reforms when our educational system is in need of deep structural change."(David Dwyer, APPLE Classrooms of Tomorrow)

- "Goal 3 speaks to demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter. We agree with that and have incorporated it into our state association vision. But that goal also calls for all students to be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment. The proposed assessment system does not seem to address these elements of the goal. Our fear is that the focus on the elements in the first half of the goal with little thought about the second half will skew attention toward thinking of curriculum in terms of the traditional college-bound track. (Thelma Jackson, President, Washington State School Directors' Association)
- "In view of how little notice or effect the Illinois system of report cards has had...we have no evidence regarding the impact this information is having on schools or students. Our test scores remain pretty stable. My question for this panel, therefore, is who will use national assessment information and how will they use it?" (Nancy Elson, President, Illinois Association of School Boards)

Public Testimony on Goal 4

Patterns in Public Testimony on Science and Mathematics

About 10 percent of all public testimony (47 oral, 65 written) concerned Goal 4. In addition, this goal was the focus of an excellent discussion at the Mathematical Sciences Education Board meeting.

Support

Although few people commented specifically on the proposed indicators or the Resource Group report, many commented on the importance of this goal. One person said that the proposed strategies were "worthy of pursuing," and another said that the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Survey of Science was a good source for student attitudes about math and science. Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, said, "The recommendations for both the September 1991 report and future ones (on Goal 4) are outstanding."

Concerns

Few people expressed reservations about any of the proposed indicators. The greatest area of concern was about the nature of the assessments that would be used to measure progress in math and science. Jane Butler-Kahle of Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, said, "The outcome measures listed by the Resource Group primarily rank students on the basis of paper-and-pencil, multiple-choice tests. They are, at best, limited measures of achievement in science and math, and their usefulness may be seriously limited by methodological flaws." Much testimony centered on the importance of testing higher order reasoning. Some cautioned against using international comparisons unless differences in the nature of the student populations and systems being tested were taken into account.

Suggested Alternatives or Refinements

Several people suggested measuring student coursetaking, and/or course enrollment figures at both the high school and junior high school levels. Many suggested tracking enrollment in math and science courses both in general and disaggregated by race and gender.

Many expressed the desire that indicators of achievement be reported from assessments that gauge higher order thinking skills and the ability to apply knowledge—not only those that require factual recall. Testimony was eloquent on the importance of measuring students' ability to apply knowledge to problems. Some suggested measuring the extent to which science instruction was "hands-on."

Many who testified on Goal 4 wanted the Panel to consider not only outcome indicators but also indicators of the precursors of those outcomes and programs that might influence the outcomes. Specifically, one person suggested reporting on "what is known

about barriers to and obstacles within the pipeline." Others suggested reporting on the presence of effective school media centers, elementary school teacher certification in math and science, and assessments of effective teacher education programs.

Several people suggested indicators relating to teachers. They suggested looking at teacher certification patterns including the math and science background of elementary teachers, the extent to which teacher education programs include subject-specific training, the availability of inservice programs for teachers in math and science, and the extent to which math and science teachers can be paid at higher rates than other teachers.

A few testified about the importance of technology and suggested measuring the ratio of students to computers in the classroom or the prevalence and use of technology in general.

Some suggested using specific data sources. Rolf Blank of the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) suggested using the recently published indicators of math and science coursetaking and teacher qualifications developed under a National Science Foundation grant. Another person referred the Panel to the Rhode Island Distinguished Merit Exam. Others suggested looking for data on inservice teacher training within the Eisenhower grant program. Others referred to projects that might supply useful data, including Project 2061, and work of the NCTM and NSTA.

Comments and Quotations

- "The outcome measures listed by the Resource Group primarily rank students on the basis of paper-and-pencil, multiple-choice tests. They are, at best, limited measures of achievement in science and math, and their usefulness may be seriously limited by methodological flaws Outcome measures concerning the background of teachers in science and math should be expanded to include assessments of successful teacher education programs ... (and) barriers to placing (and keeping) qualified teachers in the classroom." (Jane Butler-Kahle, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio)
- "Progress toward Goal 4 can be measured directly only through international assessments comparing the academic achievement of U.S. students in other countries using the same instruments. At issue is whether national consensus much less international consensus on a test framework for science can be achieved. I am concerned that in our impatience to make moves forward, we have underestimated the work required to develop instruments ... and set ourselves an impossible timeline. Another challenging task is to characterize the background in science required by teachers. In this task, I urge the cooperation of scientists and educators." (Audrey Champagne, SUNY-Albany, New York)
- "I would suggest we use tests that have proven successful in measuring broad skills in other states or nations and improve and revise those tests for our national use." (Clifford Meece, Oklahoma State School Boards Association)
- "Measuring and monitoring achievement as is implicit in Goals 3 and 4 will be the greatest challenge to the Panel and the most controversial issue at the state and local levels. We believe the proposed data collection and reporting relies too heavily on conventional thought and, in general, is not sufficiently creative or progressive for the task. We recommend that educators from the state and local levels, educational measurement experts, representatives of business and industry, other interests engage in an intensive effort to develop a model for measuring and monitoring student achievement which will be appropriate not for the school of today, but for the schools we expect to have in the future." (Robert E. Bartman, Missouri State Board of Education)
- "There is a crisis of content, especially as regards the lower grades, in mathematics and science education. These subjects are now understood to require great sophistication and insight, even at the elementary level." (Dean Alphonse Buccino, University of Georgia)
- "I have great concern that we are becoming so enamored by the results of Japanese schools, German schools, or others like them that there is a growing sentiment to adopt their structure and philosophy Japan, like most of the nations we are most frequently compared with, is basically homogeneous in its ethnic background and its

culture. We, by contrast, take pride in the diverse ethnic groups which make up our population Both the Japanese and European school systems are designed to weed out by the 9th grade level those children considered academically unable to make best use of a college education In this country, we take great pride in proclaiming that anyone who chooses to go to college can find one--80-year-old grandmothers or young people whose high school performance perhaps has contributed to our lower standing in international academic achievement comparisons." (Superintendent Harry E. Eastridge, Middletown, Ohio, School District)

- "Our experience in mathematics and science outreach confirms that three interrelated efforts are needed if things are to change. The first involves redefinition and early intervention; the second speaks to increasing enrollment in higher level math and science courses; and the third element, another major national issue, is the effort to improve the achievement and increase the participation of female and minority students in mathematics and science." (Mrs. Sharon DiFonzo, Montgomery County, Md., Board of Education)
- "While we support, in concept, the goal of giving American students the competitive edge in these disciplines, we must register profound concern about any international ranking or comparisons that do not control for the inevitable cultural and socioeconomic differences that exist between a typical American high school class and that of a country in which tracking might effectively preselect those students included in the testing pool. In many countries, students whose families or economic backgrounds parallel those of a large percentage of our urban youth would either not be in school, or would be enrolled in nonacademic programs that would eliminate them from the testing sample." (Dr. Barbara T. Jackson, Washington, D.C., Public Schools)
- "We have serious concerns with the report's general premise that the more things are measured, the more likely it is that teachers and administrators will behave differently. The emphasis on data collection rather than on tackling what have already been established as areas of concern regarding teacher training, test validity, and growth in minority and women students in the fields of science and technology severely limits the impact of the report." (Ellen J. Vargyas, Chair, National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education)

Public Testimony on Goal 5

Patterns in Public Testimony on Adult Literacy and Lifelong Learning

There was relatively little testimony on Goal 5 (written, 87; oral, 38). Many of those who did testify commented on both the importance and the difficulty defining of literacy. There was general recognition that the term encompasses more than simple decoding skills and also includes higher level skills in reading and using written material. There was discussion of the impact of parental literacy on the objectives of readiness in Goal 1. There were varied views on the inclusion of adult literacy and higher education in the same goal.

Support

Most of the testimony supported the recommended indicators on literacy and lifelong learning made by of the Resource Group. Many people said that higher education requires a different type of assessment than adult literacy, although several individuals testified that the ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve problems is an important issue for *all* adults. It was suggested that reasoning, applying knowledge, and interacting effectively with others is of paramount importance for all people.

Concerns

Several people contended that the Armed Services Vocational Assessment Battery (ASVAB) should not be used because the population taking the test is not nationally representative. (See also Resource Group 3's recommendation against the use of the Scholastic Aptitude Test and the American College Testing exam.) It was suggested that if the ASVAB test is used, the results should only be reported on a national basis.

Suggested Alternatives or Refinements

A number of people commented on problems associated with English language proficiency. Some suggested reporting the number of limited English proficient (LEP) citizens as well as the number of adults enrolled in English-as-a-second-language (ESL) programs. Several people suggested disaggregating literacy and lifelong learning data by gender, race, and ethnicity and reporting distributions of scores within ethnic groups and economic levels.

Other suggestions included reporting the number of adults participating in literacy and training programs; the number of applicants for welfare, AFDC/ADC, and SDI; the number of people passing the National Latin Exam; data relative to the number of adults in the workforce; the relationship between adult literacy, self-sufficiency, and their children's school readiness and success; and the number of students who move from school to work (before high school graduation).

Sample Comments and Quotations

- "There is no appropriate single definition of literacy. A series of criteria of ascending levels of difficulty would provide one way of addressing the intractable problem of determining a single literacy level for all adults. We believe that the national objectives under Goal 5 should specifically address America's needs for a skilled workforce and set goals for general, vocational, and technical education programs." (Andrew Seager and Jane Grover, RMC Research Corporation, Hampton, N.H.)
- "We also recommend that literacy measurements take into account not just the level of the individuals, but the relationship between literacy and self-sufficiency and the effect the literacy level of the parent has on the child. To enable the needs of low income women to be more clearly understood, we urge the Panel to ensure that the literacy measurements include data broken out by race, ethnicity, gender, and economic level, on both the literacy levels of the population and access to and completion of basic skills and literacy programs of all types. State surveys on the number of high school graduates, estimates of persons needing literacy training, GED awards, and existing and new state and national data related to literacy should be collected, disaggregated, and reported by race, ethnicity, gender, and economic level." (Ellen J. Vargyas, Chair, National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education, Washington, D.C.)
- "The single most important statistic which must be gathered, if we are to raise the standard of literacy of the entire nation, is the degree to which available adult literacy programs parallel demands for such programs. In other words, how many illiterate adult Americans who wish to learn to read are able to access a publicly funded literacy program?" (Jane R. Stern, Maryland State Teachers Association)
- "You are to be commended for including such a goal which goes far beyond literacy, but the recommendations are too vague and tend to focus on the formal education system. Much of continuing education or developmental education is informal, outside the usual degree program." (Katherine Ostrom, University of Washington, Seattle)
- "In Goal 5, more attention needs to be paid to limited-English-proficient adults and their needs for literacy and workplace skills." (Ronnie R. Webster, Massachusetts Foreign Language Association, Wilbraham)
- "In order for Americans to achieve the objectives put forth in Goal 5, we must develop a meaningful, comprehensive definition of literacy, one which articulates what adults within our society should know as well as what they should be able to do." (Elizabeth L. Holekamp, Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, South Burlington, Vermont)

- "Access to information is *the* essential element to lifelong learning In this report, no goal or issue or measurement addresses how we are going to evaluate and define information literacy that is currently being provided by libraries." (Elaine M. Albright, Director of Libraries, University of Maine, Orono)
- "Care must be taken that the data gathered here is comparable to data previously collected." (James Altais, Dean, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.)
- "We think that any survey sent to someone who is lacking in literacy skills will be completed by somebody living with them or by a friend who is literate. We think the best place to focus attention is on the pregraduation measure which is being contemplated. It is the last time we can measure the masses in a reliable and valid fashion." (Charles R. Hilston, Executive Director, Association of Wisconsin School Administrators, Madison)
- "Overall recommendations: 1) use common definitions with NCES; 2) track and survey adults over time, using common definitions; and, 3) common format systems could be complemented by competency portfolios, career/education passports, and a U.S. Lifelong Learning ... credit card to enhance recurrent entry to school." (Elinor Greenberg, University of Maryland College, Littleton, Colorado)
- "Students and parents have a right to know that what is being taught will translate into meaningful learning. Such measurement strategies could be helpful consumer information. All programs that have as their goal the promotion of literacy and lifelong learning should be held accountable for their adequacy and effectiveness..." (Karl Haigler, Advisor on Literacy to the Governor of Mississippi)
- "State leadership, ideally in the Governor's office,... (should) determine an integrated, comprehensive, and collaborative response to the goal. This system would include integration of policies of state education, employment and training, welfare, economic development, and human services." (Kathleen Ka'iulani de Silva, Hawaii Governor's Office of Children and Youth)
- "Progress toward a national goal of economic literacy for elementary and secondary school students should be measured and evaluated and necessary corrective actions taken to achieve this national literacy goal." (Phillip E. Powell, Arkansas State Council on Economic Education, Little Rock)
- "I would like to concentrate on the fifth objective of this goal. I wonder why this objective is stated for college graduates only. It seems to be important that all adults have the ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve problems. Of course, to those could be added the ability to reason, to apply knowledge, and to deal effectively with others." (James R. Fountain, GASB, Norwalk, Connecticut)
- "Please recognize our nation's community, junior, and technical colleges as the major

delivery system for adult literacy training. This is an underfunded but extremely effective system for adult literacy training for workers and nonworkers alike." (Tony Zeiss, Pueblo Community College, Colorado)

- "Literacy in the United States is a slippery topic. It used to mean the ability to read and write. ...It has come to mean the ability to read and at a particular grade level. Educators have defined themselves into a problem. Once the goal of 100 percent is achieved (an impossibility because of the retarded and those considered illiterate who will refuse additional education) will we then increase the required attributes for literacy and once again have a problem?" (Barbara A. Jur, Macomb Community College, Warren, Minnesota)
- "Instead of worrying about the students who are literate, we should put our emphasis on (educating) those who are not." (Helen M. Gless, President, Portage Board of Education, Ravenna, Ohio)

Public Testimony on Goal 6

Patterns in Public Testimony on Safe, Disciplined and Drug-Free Schools

This goal received less comment than might have been expected, given the importance the public gives the subject as indicated by public opinion polls. Roughly 10 percent of the oral (38) and written (56) testimony was on Goal 6. At some forums, this may have been because Goal 6 was the last goal discussed.

Support

Most supportive public comment on the indicators pertained to the indicators on drug use. Many people endorsed the Resource Group's broad definition of drugs to include tobacco and alcohol as well as steroids. Also, a number of people endorsed data on attitudes towards drugs as a relevant precursor to drug use. Many people endorsed the idea of having indicators of drug-free students, rather than just schools. They desired measures of student drug use both in-school and out-of-school.

Several people endorsed reporting on the safety of areas beyond the school building, and some endorsed including verbal threats among the data that are reported. Other people specifically endorsed using data relating to student and teacher feelings of safety at school, including freedom from sexual assaults and harassment. A number of people suggested reporting absenteeism and tardiness as indicators of safe schools.

Concerns

Several people said that a measure of an orderly environment should be developed that goes beyond measuring the absence of behavioral problems. One asked that this pertain to "shared motivation" that may be expressed by noise. Another was concerned that "assessing" student use of drugs might mean "drug testing" in the schools.

Suggested Alternatives or Refinements

Suggested alternatives in written testimony focused disproportionately on discipline. One person recommended seeking a broader and more positive definition of school climate as a reflection of discipline. Albert Shanker suggested measuring students' and teachers' perceptions of the enforcement of discipline policies, measuring unexcused absences and their consequences, the availability of alternative settings for violent and disruptive students, and the prevalence of the behaviors that discipline codes specify for expulsion or suspension. Someone else suggested the Office of Civil Rights Office as a source of data on student suspension and expulsion from school.

One person suggested reporting all the proposed indicators for Goal 6 for students in higher education as well as K-12. Another person suggested reporting on (youth) gang activities.

At the Regional Forums, a number of health education advocates urged measuring the degree to which schools provide students with comprehensive health services. Other suggestions included obtaining data on home and family drug-related behavior; establishing a national student ID card system; determining the extent of teacher authority to manage the classroom; and assessing the availability of multicultural programs as indices of a safe learning environment.

Sample Comments and Quotations

- "NSBA supports the recommendation of the Goal 6 Resource Group that parent and community involvement be elevated to the level of a "super-objective," i.e., one relevant to achieving all of the goals. NSBA advocates the provision of drug and alcohol curricula within the context of a comprehensive school health education program.... Since the achievement of Goal 6 is dependent on the efforts of many individuals and agencies outside of the schools, NSBA recommends that assessment of progress toward the goal include some measure of efforts by these groups." (Arlene R. Penfield, President, National School Boards Association, Alexandria, Virginia)
- "The indicators suggested for Goal 1 are an excellent model for Goal 6. In considering students' readiness for school and learning, prevention and early intervention strategies are emphasized over simple judgments of relative readiness ... A similar strategy is recommended for monitoring the status of school environments." (Ellen J. Vargyas, Chair, National Coalition of Women and Girls in Education, Washington, D.C.)
- "We found it troubling and odd that indicators for drug use do not include an elementary component. It seems to us that the most impressionable population of students is being ignored and we need to gather information on that group if we are to make a serious impact relative to this goal." (Charles R. Hilston, Executive Director, Association of Wisconsin School Administrators, Madison)
- "While information on student drug use in school is important, it seems to get the lion's share of attention in the draft while more pervasive problems are neglected. We urge the Resource Group and Panel to revisit the general issue of student discipline and attempt to beef up the indicators in this critical area." (Albert Shanker, President, American Federation of Teachers, Washington, D.C.)
- "In determining what constitutes a disciplined environment conducive to learning, some consideration should be given to the degree of authority and control which teachers have over the environment, and whether they are empowered to remove disruptive students." (Jane Stern, Maryland State Teachers Association)
- "The third objective should be changed to "Every school district will implement comprehensive school health education in K-12 that includes drug education and self-protection strategies designed to meet the school health objectives identified in *Health People 2000*." (Linda Meeks, Phil Heit, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio)

- "I suggest a special focus of indicators on what I call the 'affected population.' This is the most misunderstood, misdiagnosed and mismanaged population in our schools with reference to alcohol and other drugs. This population consists of those students who are affected by a family member's alcohol or other drug abuse or dependency. Whether it is a child born addicted to crack cocaine, or a child living in a home with an alcoholic family member, these affected children have a tremendous impact on the classroom environment and present real individual learning deficits." (Carl Mowatt, Division of Drug and Education Services, Maine Department of Education)

- "We urge the National Education Goals Panel to consider the overwhelming mass of research which includes the following (factors) in dealing with school discipline:
1. large impersonal schools surrounded by violence.... 2. individual school climate as established by principals.... 3. reinforcement for good behavior, enhancement of self-esteem, and appropriate psychological services.... 4. school alienation, violence, misbehavior, and drug use.... 5. schools must learn to work cooperatively and helpfully with parents rather than blaming them for their children's misbehavior...." (Ronda Talley, American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.)

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